

CARDIN, MIKULSKI, O'MALLEY ANNOUNCE MAJOR STEP FORWARD IN EXPANDING BROADBAND ACCESS TO MARYLANDERS

More than \$115 million in competitive stimulus funding to add more than 1,200 miles of high-speed Internet cable and bring new jobs to the state

WASHINGTON – U.S. Senators **Barbara A. Mikulski** and **Benjamin L. Cardin** (both D-Md.) and **Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley** today were joined by other members of the Maryland Congressional Delegation in announcing the state has been awarded more than \$115 million in competitive federal grant funds to extend broadband to rural and underserved communities across the state. Expanding broadband is crucial for increasing Internet access and capacity across the state, helping create jobs, improve public safety, increase educational opportunities, improve health care delivery and improve infrastructure for BRAC.

The Maryland Department of Information Technology (DoIT), in partnership with public and private agencies across the state known as the One Maryland Broadband Network, won \$115,240,581 in grant funding through the U.S. Department of Commerce's (DOC) Broadband Technology Opportunities Program. Funding was provided through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and this grant is one of the biggest broadband grants awarded to date.

One Maryland Broadband Network (OMBN) will use the funds to build more than 1,200 miles of high-speed Internet line, linking together three independent broadband networks and extending affordable and abundant Internet access to more than 1,000 anchor institutions – including 458 schools, 44 libraries, 262 police and emergency centers, 15 community colleges, 6 universities and 221 other government and community support centers. The new network will connect the state from Western Maryland to the Eastern Shore, reaching 2 million homes and 443,000 businesses.

“For too long, we failed to invest in our infrastructure and the Recovery Act has reversed that trend,” said **Senator Cardin**. “This grant to the One Maryland Broadband Network will help us build an information superhighway from the Eastern Shore to Western Maryland, one that will link cities, suburbs, and rural area to each other, bolstering public safety, opening new markets for our businesses, spurring economic growth, and providing distance learning opportunities for Marylanders regardless of where they live.”

“Broadband is the information superhighway we need to bring the jobs of tomorrow to Maryland,” said **Senator Mikulski**, a long-term champion of broadband access and Chairwoman of the Commerce, Justice and Science Appropriations Subcommittee, which funds the Department of Commerce. “It is absolutely critical to Maryland's economic future, because it creates jobs, fosters business growth and sparks innovation. These grants will help lay the foundation to save lives, improve educational opportunities and improve healthcare delivery.”

The grants are expected to create more than 800 new jobs now and at least 800 more new jobs in the future. They will provide high-speed access to parts of Maryland that had little or no Internet connectivity. Many connections are too slow to process large amounts of data quickly – a

problem when trying to send business records, video conferencing for educational coursework, medical records and emergency communications.

“Today marks the beginning of a new chapter for broadband in Maryland,” said **Governor O’Malley**. “Thanks to our federal partners, Maryland will be able to provide critical access to affordable and abundant broadband for underserved areas throughout our State. This infrastructure will not only pave the way for the future of high-speed internet service in our State, but will expand economic opportunities, create jobs, increase our ability to provide public safety and health services, and strengthen our small business communities. Together, we can make Maryland one of the best connected states in the nation.”

“This project will be a game-changer and will be vital to so many people in my District and throughout Maryland,” said **Rep. Elijah Cummings**. “Access to the staggering wealth of information, knowledge and services that broadband provides will create an absolute leveling of the playing field for our rural communities, our farmers and even those in urban areas throughout the nation. Rebuilding our economy is going to start with recreating our economy, and it will be recreated in the information sectors. Broadband access will create opportunity to get involved for those who need it the most. I am also proud to represent Coppin State University, which will play such a vital role in this endeavor. The work that institution and its students have put forth has been second to none, and they are more than deserving of their selection.”

“Our nation’s electronic infrastructure, including broadband capacity, are important tools for economic development and job growth in Maryland and around the country,” said **Rep. John Sarbanes**. “The One Maryland Broadband Network will reduce the digital divide so that all Marylanders can share in the benefits that these technologies provide.”

“This is a historic announcement. This investment ensures that businesses on the Shore will have access to the high-speed Internet infrastructure necessary to compete, thrive, and create jobs in today’s marketplace, while our schools and hospitals will have access to new opportunities and advances,” said **Rep. Frank Kratovil**. “Broadband infrastructure is critical to the economic future of the Eastern Shore and would not be possible without Recovery Act dollars going to create jobs, grow the economy and improve the quality of life for people living in communities like the Shore.”

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